

## Remarks

Claims 1-13, 15-39 and 41-53 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 8, 9, 23, 24, 28, and 34 have been amended in various particulars as indicated hereinabove.

Counsel thanks Examiner for the courtesy of the interview held yesterday. In that interview, amendments were proposed, and the relationship between claim 1 and the Ramsbottom application was discussed. Amendments similar to those proposed are implemented hereinabove. From the interview, there seemed to be consensus that these amendments would overcome the rejection based on the Ramsbottom application.

Claims 1, 8, 12-13, 16-22 and 48-49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsbottom. In a related rejection, claims 2-7, 9-11, 15, 23, 28-47 and 500-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsbottom in view of Boppart.

These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

As discussed in the interview, the Ramsbottom describes a generally coaxial arrangement between its light pipe 1 and the center fiber bundle 4A. In contrast, independent claims have been amended to exclude a coaxial arrangement between the fibers (see claims 1, 8, and 28). The claims also require that the capillary tube bores are adjacent and not coaxial (see claims 1, 8, and 28).

Claims 8 and 34 are directed to the use of coreless blocks. These blocks have side coupling terminations that are also not a coaxial arrangement with each other.

Thus, these claims should be deemed distinguishable over the applied references.

Claims 24-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boppart. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 24 requires a combination of side firing terminations and capillary tube bores that are adjacent to and not in a coaxial arrangement with each other.

Only Fig. 21a of Boppart seems to show a side firing arrangement. None of the embodiments shows something akin to the claimed capillary tubes or their bore arrangement.

Thus, these claims should be deemed distinguishable over the applied references.

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. Should any questions arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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